

(Squisher the Fish)

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giant sponge while Dot dashed under the reef. Just as Squisher was beginning his search, a school of tangs passed by. Some were yellow, some were blue, and a parrotfish or two, three, four and five. Watching the fish flowing by gave Squisher a splendid thought, it is so beautiful here, it must be paradise. "Hey Glen! Hey Dot! Hey Emily!" he shouted. The Blennies peeked out and Dot swam out and said "What's the matter my dear?" Squisher grinned and began to sing this song:

I feel that I must say,
to you on this glorious day...
it is wonderful to be here, it is great to be alive!
Now I know what our purpose is about...
It is to love one another, to help each other out.
To live each waking moment for the best that it can be!

To share anothers joy,
to take away their tears of pain,
and fade away their fears...
Because it is wonderful to be a friend,
it makes you feel alive!

To laugh when you can- loudly...
To do whatever is right...
And try the best you can!
Let's share the beauty of our living ocean shelf!

My friends and I will play...
among seafans, rocks and coral...
I feel so much pleasure, peace and pride...
It is wonderful to know you,
it is great to feel alive!

The four fish found their way back to the game of hide and seek. The day grew long as the time flew by. The four friends found fun for sure! As they were headed home, Squisher spotted some delicious sponges and the Blennies found lots of leafy greens. They dined with much delight. A perfect dinner for four hefty appetites.

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Suddenly, seeming out of nowhere, appeared a large human shape of shadow. Before she knew what was happening, Dot was scooped into a net. Squisher heard her call for help and rushed to her to help. As he approached the edge of the sponge filled shelf he came face to face with the human race. And what a face it was. The eyes were huge, the arms reached out spreading far and creating fear. Squisher turned to get away as he felt the net block the way. No matter the direction he swam to get out, the holes were too small for him to escape.

Frozen with fear, Dot grew silent and still. Squisher told her "Don't worry, I'm with you. Don't be afraid, I believe they mean no harm." The two Rock Beauties were being taken to the surface as they heard their friends say "It is wonderful to know you. It has been our pleasure and pride."

Squisher and Dot were taken to a place above the sea. The sun was so bright and the air was so dry. Large white puffy clouds were floating in the sky. What is this place? the two fish wondered. So near to their home, yet so far from what they've known, this world above the sea.

The two Rock Beauties were joined by many other fish and taken on a journey until the sea turned into land. They were packed and moved then put in glass tanks of water. Scared and hungry for two days in a row, their future uncertain. Where will they go? To be cared for by humans and protected from harm. That is their future, beginning today.

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Squisher was unsure what to think when settling into his new home, a tank. A Blue Chromis was there, along with a Jawfish pair. They were friendly it seemed, and the water was clean. But the scared little Squisher hid under a rock. After hours went by, he came out to be seen, as the food poured in from above. A young boy was there, smiling at the new fish he had acquired. Squisher was home at last! He was safe and happy to be protected from harm. He is now the king of his world, in this public aquarium.

I often wonder what it is to be a fish, captured from his world against his wish. To see a creature not like yourself, swim out of the shadow of a deep coral shelf. To take you away to the world up above, not knowing what's to happen apart from the home you love. They can teach us and flourish, because knowledge can nourish. For tropical fish which live in tanks, their world now in ours, their world in our hands. Take care of our oceans. Take care of our lands.